



Washington County
Department of Social Services
Commitment to Community



PARTNERS IN PRESS

Volume IX / Issue 3

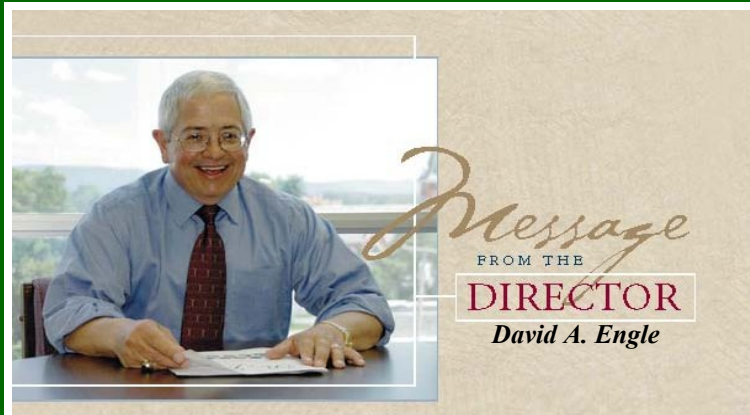
240.420.2100

Fall 2014

*We serve people, promote
self-reliance, and provide safety by
delivering quality services and
developing community
partnerships.*
-WCDSS Mission Statement

*No work is
insignificant. All
labor that uplifts
humanity has dig-
nity and impor-
tance and should
be undertaken with
painstaking
excellence.*

- Martin Luther King



DIRECTOR'S CORNER

STAFF TEAMS CREATE AN EXCITING AND BUSY FALL SEASON AT WCDSS

WCDSS has sure been a busy place this fall! We kicked off the season with an outstanding Community Partner Open House on September 15th. That event, which addressed strategic plan objectives to improve community partnerships and strengthen staff awareness of community resources, was a resounding success. Over 80 of our coworkers visited Safe Place, the child advocacy center, and our Family Center to learn first-hand the life-changing work that we do for child abuse victims and young mothers. In the afternoon, representatives from 25 local human service agencies explained their services to more than 100 agency staff and partners. The overwhelmingly positive feedback we received from all participants reflected the careful and thoughtful planning efforts by our Communications Management Team who sponsored the event. Great job team!

On October 20, our ambitious Maryland Charities (MCC) team started off their campaign with a delicious hot dog luncheon and Cornhole

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**2014-2015 WASHINGTON
COUNTY DSS ADVISORY
BOARD MEMBERS**

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Bill Beard, Vice Chair

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Terry Baker, County Commissioner,
ex-officio

Board meetings are held the fourth
Monday of the month (September-June)
at 5:30 pm in the Washington County
DSS Board Room.

How to reach us:

Wash. Co. Department of Social Services
122 N. Potomac St., Hagerstown, MD 21741
Phone: 240-420-2100 Fax: 240-420-2111
Child Abuse Hotline: 240-420-2222
www.dhr.state.md.us/washington.htm

The Safe Place — Child Advocacy Center
24 N. Walnut Street, Hagerstown, MD 21740
Phone: 240-420-4300 Fax: 240-420-4339

The Family Center and Sunshine Center
221 McRand Court
Hagerstown, MD 21740
Phone: 301-790-4002 Fax: 301-790-4007

Martin O'Malley, Governor
Anthony Brown, Lt. Governor



Tournament. Ace shots, Becky Dick and Jill Meyers were crowned as champions. Congratulations Becky and Jill! Hundreds of dollars were raised for the MCC and a great time was had by all! If you haven't already made your MCC pledge, please do so! Our annual Customer Service Appreciation Celebration was held following our All Staff Meeting on October 22nd. The celebration this year was especially appropriate as we served a record 54,167 (31%) different county residents during FY'14! Barry Shoemaker received the DHR Customer Service Excellence Award. Congratulations to Barry! I delivered the Professionalism curriculum to our latest group of new employees on October 24th. It was an outstanding class who participated fully throughout the day. I have no doubt that from that group, leaders will emerge to guide our agency in the years ahead. Our annual Employee Craft Show was held on October 29th. This wonderful annual event allows agency staff and their families to share their craft making talents with one another. It is an outstanding venue for holiday shopping, and we marvel at the creativity and artistic ability of our co-workers. Maryland Charities volunteers held a fundraising luncheon that day and the Employees First Committee (EFC), who sponsored the Craft Show, also held a bake sale to raise funds for morale building activities. Once again, thanks to employee teams (Diversity, Risk Management, Employee Recognition, Communications Management Team, MCC, EFC) who lifted our spirits and accomplished worthwhile goals. If you are not currently participating, please consider joining a team. Make new friends and strengthen WCDSS.

In the weeks ahead, staff throughout the agency will begin our annual holiday gift giving project to brighten the holidays for our neediest families. This is an enriching and rewarding initiative in which generous community sponsors donate gifts and money to fulfill our clients' holiday wishes that would otherwise go undressed. We are always overwhelmed by the generosity of our community which is coordinated by Sherie Nigh and Patricia Funk. Thanks soooo much Sherie and Patricia! In December we will have our annual luncheon for the County Commissioners to update them on the life-changing work of the Family Center, the School Family Partnership, Adult Foster Care providers, and the therapeutic services rendered by Safe Place, the child advocacy center. Before we go off to enjoy holidays with families and friends, the EFC will host our annual holiday party on December 10th to thank our co-workers for their hard work and support over the year and to celebrate our accomplishments.

It has been a hectic, but pleasant fall season, and a wonderful year. We have been busier than ever serving those less fortunate in our community, but as we have worked hard, staff teams have helped us celebrate our good deeds. We close the year thankful for our opportunity to make Washington County a kinder, healthier, safer place for all its citizens.

DIVERSITY TEAM BROWN BAG LUNCHEON

On Tuesday, September 23, 2014, the Diversity Team sponsored another very successful brown bag luncheon. **Dina Daly**, the Director of Caroline County DSS, visited and told staff who attended about her native Cabo Verde, an island country spanning an archipelago of 10 volcanic islands off the coast of Western Africa. Dina shared music, pictures and her experiences growing up in Cabo Verde, known for its warm year-round climate, diverse landscape and cultural wealth. In addition, Dina prepared a specialty dish of Cabo Verde, tuna pate, for all to sample. Diversity Team members brought desserts of all kinds, including cupcakes, brownies, cookies and banana pudding.



Dina Daly & David Engle

The Diversity Team wishes to thank all staff members who came out to support our efforts and invites anyone interested in joining the Diversity Team to come to our meetings held on the third Wednesday of every month at 2:30 p.m. All are welcome.



DSS PARTICIPATES in CONVOY OF HOPE

Hagerstown hosted its sixth "Hope for Hagerstown" event on Saturday, October 4th at the Hagerstown Sun's Stadium. Gates opened at 10:00 a.m. and remained opened until all the supplies were gone. Those with special needs were able to enter at 9:30 a.m.

The event offered free haircuts, groceries, portraits, health screenings, dental screenings, hot lunches, kid's carnival, and access to many community resources. The cost to put on the event is paid for entirely through donations. Approximately 3,800 of our residents took advantage of the goods and services offered. "Hope for Hagerstown" is only one stop on the \$50M tour across the country.

Volunteers from WCDSS and Safe Place included **Monica Battle, Patti Daley, Johanna Keefer, Dan Moreland, Mooch Mutchler, Ligia Teodorovici, Sharall Turner, and Gerri Zacari**. Mary Ellen Waltemire, board member of Friends for Safe Place, also volunteered for the day. A good time was had by all for a good cause.



WCDSS COMMUNITY PARTNER

The Arc of Washington County's Autism Waiver Program

The Arc of Washington County's Stepping Stones program allows children with Autism Spectrum Disorder to receive services to support them in their homes and in the community. To be eligible for Arc's Autism Waiver services, the child or young adult must have an Autism Spectrum Disorder diagnosis. The Autism Waiver provides a variety of services including In-Home Respite Care, Intensive Individual Support Services, and Therapeutic Integration Services. Activities include: Communication Development, Behavior Shaping and Management, Personal Care Skills, Socialization, Recreation, Mobility, Sensory Motor Development and Therapeutic Activities. The program offers one on one services as well as small group activities. The program offers services days, evenings, and weekends.



The Arc of Washington County's Psychiatric Rehabilitation (PRP) services facilitate the development of an individual's independent living and social skills, including the individual's ability to make decisions regarding self-care, illness management, life, work and community participation. To be eligible for Arc's PRP services, the child or young adult must have a Primary Axis DSM-IV diagnosis. PRP also promotes the use of community resources to integrate the individual into the community. The Arc's Psychiatric Rehabilitation Program offers a multitude of community and home-based services for school-age children through young adults. School-age services include: school and community socialization skills, recreational activities, disability awareness and management and intensive, and home-based rehabilitation. Young adult services include: school and community socialization skills, life skills, supportive living, recreational and leisure skills, vocational skills, and disability awareness and management.

Founded in 1952, The Arc of Washington County promotes community involvement, independence and dignity for children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. We strive to help those we serve to achieve their individual goals, expand their horizons and maximize their opportunities. Serving people of all ages and with a wide range of developmental disabilities, we work closely with everyone who receives our services to create highly personalized programs that complement individual needs and preferences. They are a private, non-profit local chapter of The Arc of Maryland and The Arc of The United States, the largest volunteer organization in the world devoted exclusively to improving the quality of life for all persons with developmental disabilities.

For more information about Stepping Stones, please contact Doug Ford, Jr., Director, at 301-791-3370, ext. 2263. <http://www.arcwc-md.org>.

MIKE PIERCY PROMOTED TO ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, ACFS



On September 15, 2014 **D. Michael Piercy** was promoted to the position of Assistant Director for Adult, Child and Family Services (ACFS) division.

Mr. Piercy began state employment at Baltimore City Department of Social Services (BCDSS) as a Foster Care Worker in August 1994. During graduate school, he worked in BCDSS's Adult Protective Services and Homeless units. In 2001 Mr. Piercy was promoted to Child Protective Services Supervisor here at WCDSS. He subsequently served as Family Services' Supervisor. Mr. Piercy was promoted to Child Welfare Program Manager in 2010. He has many noteworthy accomplishments in his thirteen years here. Most recently, he led our agency's successful implementation of the Alternative Response Law. He was instrumental in the initiation of the "Bester Community Cares" project in 2008. In 2006, he led CHESSIE implementation in our county. Mr. Piercy holds a MSW degree from the University of Maryland at Baltimore and is a Licensed Certified Social Worker – Clinical (LCSW-C). In addition, Mr. Piercy is trained in Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy and is bilingual in Spanish.

Child Support Awareness Month-August 2014

August was Child Support Awareness month. The Public Awareness Team implemented a special initiative, "Money Walks", for customers who had been set for court. Members of the team gave customers the opportunity to make a lump sum payment, and in return it would allow their case to be removed from the court docket. Using the court dockets from 8/8/14, 8/22/14, 9/12/14 and 9/26/14, the agency collected a total of **\$36,175.48**.



The success rate for the initiative are as follows: for the August 8 docket the group received a 25% response rate, for the August 22 docket the response rate was 22%, the September 12 docket received a 19% response rate and finally there was a 9% response rate for the September 26 docket. Letters were the main source of contact for the team.

In addition to the initiative, the team handed out 110 bags of school supplies during the annual Elgin Fair along with 45 backpacks that were handed out to five schools. Items were also distributed to the Child Support staff as an appreciation for everyone's hard work. Staff were also surprised with a WCDSS polo shirt.

The Public Awareness Team was comprised of **Zac Green, Marcia Williams, Gerri Zaccaria, Cory Green, Sarah Cutchall, Anne Goulart, and Debbie Mills, the facilitator for the team.** Thanks to everyone on the team for their hard work and time they put into the initiative.

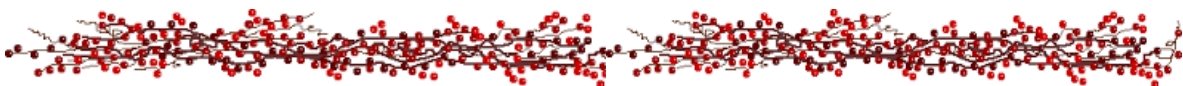
ChildSupport.
It's more than just money.



Maryland's IV-E Waiver Program

The IV-E Waiver is part of Title IV-E of the Social Security Act, the federal legislation that authorizes services we provide. Maryland was awarded a five-year \$650M federal grant to try to improve safety, prevent abuse, and reduce the need for foster care. In 2007 former DHR Secretary Brenda Donald introduced Place Matters, an initiative that every child deserves a place to call home. As a result of Place Matters, Family Involvement Meetings (FIMs) were instituted and there are 43% fewer children in foster care today than any time since 2007. There were tremendous cost savings when this occurred. Now, with the waiver approval, block granted monies from the federal government will be used in creative effective ways to help children remain safely in their families or prepare for adulthood when remaining with their families is not an option.

There are two age groups which are the targets of the money: those that are birth to 8 year old children and ages 14-18 year old youths. Research shows that once a child in foster care reaches age 14, that child will most likely age out of the system. Also, children birth to 8 years of age are the cohort that most frequently enter foster care. There are three goals of Maryland's waiver that accompany the two targeted populations. They are: to reduce entries into foster care, reduce re-entries into foster care, and reduce the length of stay in foster care, especially for older teens. Interventions that are paid for by the waiver to assist DSS families will have to be evidenced based and approved by the California Evidence Based Clearinghouse (CEBC) for Child Welfare. The waiver program will be the subject of outcome effectiveness research spearheaded by the University Of Maryland School Of Social Work. The distribution formula on how the money is to be released to the different counties and vendors is still being worked out at the state level. Regardless, this infusion of money provided by the federal government to help Maryland's neediest families, is good news for all.



HELEN BAKER RECEIVES GOVERNOR'S SERVICE AWARD

Helen Baker, a volunteer at Washington County Department of Social Services, was honored for her "volunteer" contribution to the WCDSS Child Support Enforcement Division at a statewide ceremony hosted by the Governor's Office on Service and Volunteerism in Annapolis, MD on October 9th.

Mrs. Baker began her service with WCDSS in 2001 as part of the Department of Aging Senior Community Service Employment Program. In October 2013, she was no longer eligible for compensation through this program and asked if she could continue her previous duties as a volunteer.

Her duties are focused on the Child Support Division where she opens and delivers all received mail, pulls files for specialists, greets and escorts customers and much more. Helen works approximately 15 hours per week and will adjust her hours readily if she feels needed to help with a special project. Helen arrives for work early and stays beyond her scheduled volunteer hours. She comes to work in the snow and has been told to go home when she has been feeling under the weather. She always has a smile on her face and spreads words of encouragement to those around the Department. She is well known throughout the agency for her willingness to help with anything she is able to do. Helen's energy is contagious and remarkable. Her sense of humor and quick wit has endeared her to our agency staff. She is an inspiration as her dedication and work ethic is something to be admired.



Helen Baker, WCDSS Volunteer

In her nomination, Barbara Moyer, Assistant Director for Child Support stated, "Helen's volunteerism is an awesome reminder that the work we do is not a job, it is a service. Her service to our community contributes in a positive way to the child support caseload of approximately 6,000 Maryland citizens." ***Congratulations Helen!***

Together With Families, Inc.



TWF, Inc. is a newly formed 501(c)3 with the specific objective and purpose to raise funds for the Washington County Family Center and Sunshine Center Family Visitation Program. Both programs provide a variety of services to parents and children together and cover an array of services in the Child Welfare spectrum. Each program strives to: promote the healthy development of children by supporting strengths-based services; impact families at risk of poverty, abuse and neglect and, reduce trauma to families experiencing out of home placement. The TWF, Inc. board members are strong supporters of the Family Center and Sunshine Center. They have already donated countless hours developing the mission and governance rules, recruiting other board members and spreading the word about this newly formed organization. The board has begun brainstorming fund raising activities. In the meantime, like us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/togetherwithfamiliesinc>

TOGETHER WITH FAMILIES, INC Board of Directors

Carrol Lourie – President ■ Vickie Noe – Vice President ■ Mark Jordan – Secretary
Sara Greaves – Treasurer ■ Hazel Farris – Director ■ June Scheer – Director
Mary Jo Ashburn – Director ■ Debra Dellinger – Director

TWF, Inc. is currently seeking additional board members. Anyone interested may contact Dori Yorks at the Family Center, 301-790-4006, or Shana Matthews at the Sunshine Center, 301-790-4001. Special thanks to Eric Wiles for the creation and design of the Together With Families, Inc. logo.

DSS OPENS ITS DOORS

The Washington County Department of Social Services hosted a Community Partner Open House on Monday, September 15, 2014. The event provided WCDSS staff an opportunity to learn about the variety of services that each of the human services community partners provides to the citizens of Washington County. It also gave the community partners an opportunity to learn about the services provided by WCDSS.

David Engle welcomed the participants telling them that the mission of WCDSS is "to serve people, promote self-reliance, and provide safety by delivering quality services and developing community partnerships." He said, "We, the human service agencies of Washington County, achieve our greatest effectiveness meeting community needs when we work most closely together."

Representatives from 25 community partners provided displays, brochures and one-on-one sessions with WCDSS staff and other partners during the three hour event. Approximately 100 persons from human service agencies throughout Washington County joined the WCDSS staff to learn about all of the services available to the citizens of Washington County. The Safe Place Child Advocacy Center, the Sunshine Family Visitation Center and the Washington County Family, all off-site programs of WCDSS, were open for tours during the morning. The Community Partner Open House is an initiative of the WCDSS Strategic Plan. A biennial event, this year was the third open house sponsored by WCDSS.

SPEAK UP PHOTO GALLERY

NEWS Crew photos by **Brother Andy & John Williams**

Open House at the Washington County Department of Social Services



Dave Engle, DSS Director, visited agencies invited to showcase at the Open House event his agency hosted to help their employees get connected with other resources for DSS clients. Pictured with Engle is Speak Up Community News Crew outreach team members Ronita Walton and Mollie Smith. DSS employees visited about twenty vendors at the event.

DSS COMMUNITY OUTREACH

The Hispanic Association of Hagerstown hosted the **8th Annual Hispanic Festival** at Fairgrounds Park on Sunday, September 14, 2014. Those in attendance enjoyed musical performances, dancing, and a variety of food. Several vendors were onsite to provide workshops and information about jobs and community programs. Money raised by the event funded scholarships to Hagerstown Community College. Safe Place staff, Friends of Safe Place Board Members, and Washington County Department of Social Services staff members from Family Investment and Child Support were available at informational tables to answer questions on services our agencies offer and hand-out outreach materials. Volunteers from DSS included **Sharall Turner, John Rohrer, Johanna Keefer and Mooch Mutchler.**



HEALTH CARE REFORM

To help make the upcoming open enrollment period of the Affordable Care Act a success, the state of Maryland has launched a statewide initiative, creating 40 state merit positions. These positions will be used to process Medical Assistance cases only. Washington County was lucky enough to receive seven of these positions. Congratulations to **Justin Culbertson, Michelle Kerr, Anysa Lovett, Lindsey Mullenix, Debbie Neal, Michael Royer, and Korri Sanchez**, who will move from their contractual positions here at WCDSS to state employment.

These seven, along with others in similar positions throughout the state, will be responsible for processing Medical Assistance applications that come through www.marylandhealthconnection.com. The cases they process will not be limited to only those who live in Washington County. They will process cases from throughout the state of Maryland.



The second open enrollment period of the Affordable Care Act begins on November 15, 2014 and continues through February 15, 2015.



Consumers can visit MarylandHealthConnection.gov to learn more information about the Affordable Care Act and what it means for them. While there, they may browse the different plans that may be available to them and if interested, apply online. Customers can also continue to apply face to face here at the agency.

Family Investment processes Medical Assistance applications year round, but the open enrollment period provides a variety of different options for people whose income may be too much to receive Medicaid.

With the second open enrollment period comes a number of changes here at WCDSS. Family Investment workers have been attending trainings to learn the new computer systems that will be used to process Medical Assistance applications.

SPS, The HUB, Workday and YOU!

The **State Personnel System (SPS)** is finally here. Family Investment was automated with CARES, Child Welfare was automated with CHESSIE, Child Support was automated with CSES, Finance was automated with FMIS. Finally, after many years of planning, human resources for the State of Maryland is being automated with a new SPS system that is referred to as the **"The Hub" or "Workday"**.

The Hub goes live on November 12, 2014. All facets of human resources (recruitment, leave keeping, benefits, personnel files, "personal" personnel data) will all be transacted through the personnel system by human resources staff or by YOU!

The following are some of the changes that you will see:

- Name changes, address changes, emergency contacts, W-4 changes will all be completed by YOU online.
- Your timesheet will be completed online by YOU and transmitted through a chain of command to your supervisor for approval and ultimately to the HR office. (Coming in the fall of 2015)
- Open enrollment will be completed by YOU online. (Coming in the fall of 2015)
- PEPs will be done electronically and transmitted through the chain of command through The Hub. (Coming in 2015)
- YOU will establish an employee ID through the POSC website (where you currently get your paystub). The employee ID will be used instead of your Social Security Number for all transactions.
- Training will be scheduled by YOU and Continuing Education Units (CEUs) tracked by YOU through The HUB if your classification requires CEUs.

Stay tuned as the HR Office moves into The Hub, also sometimes referred to as "Workday". You will be given training and instruction as your interaction with the system becomes available.

By: Bruce Massey, Assistant Director of Administration